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The Athenian Mercury.

Saturday, *May* 25. 1695.

Queſt. 1, *THere's a very ſtrange Story in the Additions to* Cambden, *from p.* 659. *to* 661. *(as well as more* contracted *in the* Tranſactions of the Royal Society *) concerning a certain* fiery Exhalation, *near* Harlech *in* Merioneth-ſhire *in* Wales, *which has done conſiderable miſchief in the Country. Sixteen Ricks of Hay, and two* Barns, *one full of Corn, the other of Hay, having been totally conſum'd by it. The Deſcription given thereof by Eye-witneſſes, is, that 'twas a ſort of a blue weak Flame, eaſily extinguiſh'd, and that it did not in the leaſt hurt thoſe who endeavor'd to ſave the Hay, tho they were ſometimes actually in it. Thoſe who have* watcht it, *have diſcover'd that it paſſes an* Arm *of the* Sea, *from* Carnarvan-ſhire, *diſtant about* 8, *or* 9 *miles from* Harlech. *The times of its appearance is generally in the night, and in the* Winter *more frequently then in the* Summer, *much about the ſame diſtance of time, and proceeding conſtantly to and fro from the ſame places for about* 8 *months. But it has had worſe effects then thoſe already mention'd, for it* poiſon'd *the* Graſs, *as well as burnt the* Hay *for the ſpace of about a mile, there being three ſmall Tenements ſo infected, that the* Graſs *at laſt kill'd all manner of* Cattle *that fed upon it; which it ſeems had been* infectious *for three years, tho not quite fatal till the laſt, there having been a great mortality by it, of all ſorts of* Cattle; *all which you may ſee atteſted in the place and Book before mention'd, by ſeveral perſons who have too much cauſe to know it. It's ſeen in* ſtormy *as well as* calm nights, *but any great* noiſe, *ſuch as the ſounding of* Horns, *diſcharging of* Guns, &c. *does either repel, or extinguiſh it. The Author of the additions to* Cambden, *is of opinion that this proceeds from a conſiderable quantity of* Locuſts, *which creatures it ſeems have been ſeen in thoſe parts, which being drown'd in the* Sea, *and afterwards* caſt *a* ſhore, *will certainly cauſe a* peſtilence; *and that this* noxious vapour, *meeting with a* viſcous Exhalation *in the* Mooriſh Bay *over which it paſt, might kindle, and conſume the* Corn *and* Hay, *as the* Locuſts *themſelves wou'd have done, if living. Pray your opinion concerning this ſtrange appearance.*

Anſw. We have conſulted the place, in the *New-Cambden*, and find the ſubſtance of all that's there ſaid, repreſented in the queſtion; only the Gentleman propoſes the way of ſolution here mention'd but as an *hypotheſis*, not being at all poſitive in his opinion; owning that the cauſe of ſuch a very extraordinary *Phænomenon*, cannot be found out without making obſervations for ſome time upon the place, which we heartily wiſh were done by ſome ingenious perſon, if it ſtill continues, and ſomeway communicated to the *publick*, either by us, or ſome *better hands*.

The Gentleman who makes publick the Relation, is there of opinion that ſuch a *Phænomenon* is wholly *new*, and that no *Hiſtorian*, or *Philoſopher* ever deſcrib'd any ſuch before; adding, that 'twas never read that any of thoſe *fiery Exhalations* which we call, *Ignis fatuus*, *Ignis Lambens*, *Scintillæ volantes*, &c. have had ſuch effects as this, to *poiſon* the *Air*, or *Graſs*, ſo as to render it *infectious* and *mortal*, nor any *Fires* of this nature of ſuch *conſiſtence* as to kindle *Hay* and *Corn*, nay, to conſume *Barns* and *Houſes*, nor to *move* ſo *regularly* as this, or laſt ſo long. We have known a perſon who has had the *Ignis Lambens* here mention'd, ſeen in the night on his *Head* and *Shoulders* by others at ſome diſtance from him, which has been ſo far from *burning* him that he has not been ſo much as *ſenſible* of it. The *Ignis Fatuus* has alſo odder effects then one wou'd eaſily believe, ſtrangely *dazling* and confounding *Travellers*, tho they have been before never ſo well acquainted with their *way*; and *waveing* about, in a *blawiſh-ſtream*, ſomething like an *S.* paſſing with a wonderful quickneſs from one place to another. But what's this, or the *Scintillæ Volantes* either, to the preſent caſe? We have met ſomewhere in leed, with a relation of a prodigious *Draco-Volans*, which has had even worſe effects then this Meteor; Tho neither was that *Regular*, nor of ſuch continuance. The Relators *Conjecture* is ingenious, and 'tis but fair to let it paſs till any can *advance* a *better*. If ſome *Locuſts* landed in this part of the Country ſo little a while before, 'tis not at all improbable, as he obſerves, that greater *quantities* of 'em might be *Shipwrackt* on the neighbouring *Seas* before they cou'd reach *Harbor*, and 'tis remarkable, that ſome of 'em have been obſerv'd, as he was inform'd by an *Eyewitneſs* on the very *ſhores* of *Caernarvon-ſhire*, whence this *Fire* was ſeen to *ariſe*. The *ſubſtance* of theſe corrupted *Locuſts* being, 'tis probable, fit enough to produce a ſort of a *Phoſphor*, by the wiſe Chymiſtry of nature: There being very many things which ſhine at leaſt when thus corrupted; we believe moſt ſorts of *Fleſh* and *Fiſh*, as well as other ſubſtances. As for the *contagion* occaſion'd by this *vapour*, it ſeems rather wonderful that it does no more *miſchief*, then that it has done ſo much, eſpecially if the *Hiſtorians Conjecture* be true, that it owes its *original* to thoſe *corrupted Locuſts*, which have been ſtrangely *peſtilential* in moſt places where they have been driven in any quantities, tho ſome *ſtraglers* of 'em have been met with, both alive and dead, in ſeveral parts, and on ſeveral *Shores of England*, of late years, as we have been inform'd by *Eyewitneſſes*. But thanks be to God, they han't come with ſuch a *Vengeance*, as *Sigebert* tells us, they once did to *France*, which after " they had laid *waſt*, being carry'd by the *wind*, " and *plung'd* in the *Britiſh Ocean*, and thence thrown " back again upon the *Shore*, their ſtench *infected* the " Air to that degree that the third part of men were " *deſtroy'd* by it.

Queſt. 2. *What are we to think of that frequent mention that is made in the* Chriſtian Apologiſts, *of their caſting out* Devils *from poſſeſs'd perſons whereas many hold that thoſe* Poſſeſſions *were peculiar to the time of our Saviour; and others, that they were nothing elſe but* Diſeaſes?

Anſw. That *Devils* were ſomething worſe then *Diſeaſes* we have formerly prov'd, nor is there any great difficulty in doing it, to thoſe who either *believe* the *Scriptures*, or the *Fathers*. They did indeed *inflict Diſeaſes*, but for that very reaſon they muſt be ſomething elſe, as the cauſe muſt needs differ from the effect. The *Jews*, 'tis plain, believ'd 'em different, for they ſay Chriſt caſt out Devils, through *Belzebub*, the *Prince* of the *Devils*; and what true ſence wou'd this make if we ſhou'd read it; " Diſeaſes by the Prince of *Diſeaſes*. But after our Saviours time, we read in the *Acts* of the *Apoſtles*, of the *Pythoneſſa*, a maid who had a Spirit of Divination, a *wicked one*, whom the *Apoſtle* caſt out, which if a diſeaſe only, how cou'd it get her maſter *gain*? if a cheat, how cou'd the Apoſtle *expell it*? The inſtances are almoſt innumerable of the appeals which are made to the *Jews*, and *Heathens*, by all the ancient *Apologiſts*, concerning this matter. *Juſtin Martyr* in his *Dialogue*, ſays, 'Even now alſo we that believe in 'that Jeſus, who was crucify'd under *Pontius Pilate*, 'have all the *Devils* and *Evil Spirits ſubject* unto us 'when we *adjure* them in his name at whoſe *power* the 'Devils tremble. So *Origen* againſt *Celſus*; 'Chriſti-'ans, ſays he, caſt out Devils, not by curious, or *Magical*

'gical Arts, but only by Prayer, and a ſimple adjuration, and this not only the Learned men amongſt 'em, but even the Idiots, or Unlearned. Lactantius confirms the ſame; ſo does Minutius and others; but none more clearly then Tertullian, in many places of his writings, particularly in his Apology, Cap. 23. De ſpectac. Elegia & Damonibus, where he is proving the Heathen Gods to be Devils, and does it by the following Demonſtration, as he himſelf juſtly calls it. " Let any one, ſays he, be brought before your Tribunals, who, 'tis plain, is poſſeſs'd by a Devil (quem Damone agi conſtat) he ſpeaks of it as a thing common, and notorious. " The ſpirit (he " goes on) being commanded to ſpeak by any Chri- " ſtian will with as much truth confeſs himſelf to " be a Devil, as he will in other places falſely pre- " tend to be a God. Again, if they don't confeſs " themſelves to be Devils, before a Chriſtian, to " whom they dare not lie, we give you leave to kill " that Saucy Chriſtian on the very place. Now can we ſuppoſe any man in his right ſences would talk at this rate if he had not been ſure of matter of fact. Again, when he ſpeaks of the multitude of Chriſtians, pars pene major cujuſq; civitatis, almoſt the Major part of every City, (therefore not ſo few as ſome tell us.) " If they ſhou'd leave you, ſays he, " who could deliver your bodies and minds from " thoſe ſecret, deſtroying Enemies, from the Incur- " ſions of Evil Spirits, which we caſt out of you " without price and without reward? 'Twou'd be " revenge enough that you'd be then left to theſe " unclean Spirits. And he ſays no leſs to Scapula; " We conquer the Devils, ſays he, and lead 'em in " Chains every day, and caſt 'em out of men, as is " known to many. By all which 'tis plain that theſe things were not done in a corner, not among the Chriſtians only, but the miracles were wrought on the very Heathens, their bitter enemies, and this ſometime after, as Optatus and St. Auſtin affirm of their own knowledge. We ſhall conclude this great queſtion with ſome remarkable expreſſions of Grotius on this ſubject. " Later ages (ſays he) are full of " teſtimonies of the ſame nature, and if any ſhou'd " now preach Chriſt, in ſuch a manner, as he wou'd " be preacht to Nations which have no knowledge of " him, (among whom only miracles are needful, as " 1 Cor. 14. 22.) I doubt not, ſays he, but the force " of our Saviours promiſe wou'd ſtill remain. But " we are wont to caſt the blame upon God, when " the Fault is really in our own ſloth and unbelief.

Advertiſements.

☞ The Gentleman who ſent this week (from Round Court in the Strand) a very Curious, and well atteſted Relation, ſhall have it inſerted in the Hiſtory of Remarkable Providences, &c. now preparing for the Preſs. —— This is further to give notice, That what other Relations are ſent (to the Undertaker of the ſaid Work) purſuant to the Directions laid down in the Propoſals for carrying of it on, ſhall be all inſerted under proper Heads —— Propoſals and Specimens, giving a full Account of this Hiſtory of Providence, are to be had of the Undertaker, John Dunton, at the Raven in Jewen-ſtreet, as alſo of Edm. Richardſon, near the Poultrey Church, and of moſt Bookſellers in London and the Countrey.

☞ Laſt Week was Publiſhed —— A Sermon upon the Death of the Queen of England, Preached in the Walloon-Church at the Hague, Feb. 6. 1695. Upon theſe Words, Acts, 9. v. 36, 37. There was at Joppa a certain Diſciple whoſe name was Tabitha, which ſignifies Dorcas, who was full of Good Works and the Alms deeds which ſhe did. It hapn'd in thoſe days that ſhe fell ſick and dy'd. By Iſaac Claude, Miniſter of the Walloon-Church. Done into Engliſh from the Second Edition Printed in French.

*** Both printed for John Dunton, at the Raven in Jewen-ſtreet. And may alſo be had of Edm. Richardſon, near the Poultrey-Church.

☞ There will be publiſh'd in Engliſh, The Duke of Luxemburgh's Funeral Oration, Printed for Samuel Darker, and will be ſold by moſt Bookſellers in London and Weſtminſter.

THere being ſeveral large ſums paid in to the New Monthly Chance, it will certainly be drawn quite full, at the Barbadoes Coffee-houſe in Exchange-Alley, Cornhil; on the 10th of June next.

The Milliners Lottery, at the Three Chairs in Cornhil, that was to be drawn this month, will certainly be drawn the 18th of June, full or not full; but it is hoped it will be quite full; to be drawn at Mr. Hill's Dancing-School in Crosby-ſquare in Biſhopſgate-ſtreet.

SUch Perſons as are willing to Buy or Sell Blank or benefit Tickets in the Million Lottery, may have ready mony for either, or be furniſhed with either, at the Mercury Office, at the ſign of the Trinity-Houſe in Finch Lane, London, every day, from 1 a Clock to 4 in the Afternoon; Attendance being given theſe 3 hours only.

At the gilded Acorn, in St. Pauls Church-yard near S. Auſtins Church, turning down the Old Change next Watling-ſtreet; where all ſorts of Papers and Pamphlets, are digeſted in their proper order and method, conſiſting of Divinity in all its branches, and all manner of Eccleſiaſtical matters, Acts of Parliament in moſt years, and almoſt all other Parliamentary Proceedings and Conſtitutions; Gazets, and News of all ſorts, ſtate Affairs, very curious and ſelect Tracts, Government, Hiſtory, Miſcellany, Letters, Lives, Characters, Caſes, Articles of War and Peace, Commerce, Liſts, Catalogues, London Affairs Common and Civil, Law, Printing, Propheſies, Sea Affairs, Trials, Plots, Voyages, Travels, Witchcraft, War, Duelling, Gaming, Trade, Improvements, Husbandry, Philoſophical Tranſactions, Phyſick, Poems, Plays, &c. are to be ſold at reaſonable Rates, to any Perſon, who may have the liberty of picking what they pleaſe more or leſs; at the above-ſaid Acorn next the Old-Change. Catalogues, Price 1 s. may be now had at Mr. Gillyflowers in Weſtminſter-Hall, Mr. Brown near Temple-bar, Mr. Bateman by Holborn-Bars, Mr. Hindmarſh over againſt the Royal-Exchange Cornhil, and at the place of ſale, the Shop being now open.

Thoſe Excellent Diaphoretick and Diuretick pills, commonly called Mathews's pills, working by ſweat and Urin, very much experienced in the Eaſe and Cure of the moſt deplorable, and dolorous diſeaſes, as well Chronical as acute, incident to humane bodies; as many thouſands can teſtifie not only in his Kingdom, but alſo beyond the Seas, and in our Forreign Plantations, who have found their good effects in the Gout, Rheumatiſm, pains in the Limbs, Aches, Sciatica, Colds, Coughs, Dropſies, Jaundice, Stone, Gravel, Kings Evil, Gonorrhea, Aſthma, ſhortneſs of Breath, Collick, Small-Pox, Gripes, opens all obſtructions, cum multis aliis; for want of which pills many languiſhing in their Diſtempers, not knowing where they may be had, well prepared, this therefore is to inform them, that they are faithfully prepared and Sold at the firſt houſe on the Right hand, having a Porch at the Door, in Gun-Yard, in Hounds-Ditch, near Ald-Gate, London.

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